



major power of the second order. This carries with it obligations that cannot be jettisoned, and we therefore feel unable to endorse the geographical and functional limitations that have been advocated in the Report.

These general judgments are supported by a view of Britain's role and interests which is sharply opposed to the assumptions which the Report appears to make. Much of this country's international influence springs from its unique experience of the problems of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, and its great stock of knowledge, together with both personal and institutional links all over the world. This stock becomes outdated and useless if it is not constantly maintained and renewed.

The Report underestimates both the importance of that influence and the future importance of two-thirds of the world's consumers in what is unhappily termed the "Outer Area". Just because the influence of metropolitan Britain is less than it was fifty years ago, the need for representation overseas is surely greater, not less. Further, if there is any prospect of economic development in the Third World over the next thirty years, it must result in raising consumption standards. India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines - to name only five countries, with a population by 1975 of almost 1,000 million - will be markets of weighty importance; and this leaves out another 2,000 million in the rest of the developing world. If we dissociate ourselves from the early stages of this growth, we are unlikely to be able to claim any part of the resulting markets.

To suppose that commercial representatives by themselves can gain a fair share of these markets is to ignore the great and growing influence of governments in the developing world in decreeing the direction of domestic investment and external trade, and in choosing their trading partners; and hence to underestimate the need for diplomatic missions to be equipped to deal with commercial and economic policy.

The Report's treatment of Aid Administration is inadequate. In our view it fails to comprehend the true nature of the work of aid administrators overseas, or the extent to which aid administration can become a residual responsibility in under-manned and over-worked missions. In particular it underestimates the contribution that can be made to the more effective use of aid by agricultural and other

specialist appointments in overseas missions, and by the establishment of further development divisions in suitable areas.

The Report has far reaching policy implications for the attainment of Britain's objectives over the remaining thirty years of this century. But the redeployment of the foreign service over a whole generation is too important a matter to be influenced by likely small savings in foreign exchange to ease Britain's current economic difficulties. The Report represents the views of a small committee working to a very tight timetable. It should be subjected to searching debate in public and in Parliament before action is taken on its findings.